



Zion National Park News Release

May 24, 2010

For Immediate Release

Erik DeGroat 435-772-0180

10-22

Revised Zion Road Construction Schedule

A road reconstruction project on the Zion-Mt Carmel Highway in Zion National Park will begin June 1, 2010, and is scheduled to end by October 28. This historic road, officially opened in 1930, has had no major work since then and now needs major reconstruction. When completed, the project will provide an improved, stabilized, and safer road for over two million visitors annually. Superintendent Jock Whitworth said, "Zion Canyon, the most visited area of the park, and its famous trails and attractions will remain open and accessible. Zion National Park will be open for the duration of the project."

Starting June 7, delays and closures in the construction zone will occur Monday through Friday, with traffic control possible at all other times. This is a change from the previously announced construction schedule. People travelling to Zion National Park on SR 9 from Interstate 15 will be able to access Zion Canyon's attractions and facilities and the businesses in Springdale without being in the construction area. Only travel between US 89 and Zion Canyon will be affected.

ZION-MT CARMEL HIGHWAY (TUNNEL ROAD) CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE:

June 7-October 28

Monday - Friday	
9:00am-4:00pm	Closed to travel
4:00pm-9:00am	Open under traffic control. Night work/delays. No stopping, parking, bicycles or pedestrians.
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays	
Open 24 hours, traffic control possible	Parking and hiking allowed, except in work areas. No bicycles allowed on the roadway.

Tunnel Escort Hours for Large Vehicles

Monday-Friday		
7:00am-9:00am and 4:00pm-8:00pm (until July 31)	All vehicles 7'10" wide or wider and/or 11'4" tall or taller are required to have an escort and can only travel during these times. This includes most dual wheeled pickup trucks, recreational vehicles and tour buses. After July 31 the hours may shorten due to lack of daylight.	
Saturday and Sunday		
7:00am-8:00pm (until July 31)		

The road will be graded gravel in the work sections and the surface may be uneven at times. Please use caution and low speeds in these areas. Due to safety concerns, bicycles will not be allowed on the roadway for the duration of the project. Bicyclists wishing to travel between the Canyon Junction and the East Entrance will need to arrange for a private vehicle to take them all the way through those two locations.

Alternate routes of travel between Zion Canyon and U.S Highway 89 are Utah State Route 59 from Hurricane, Utah to Arizona State Route 389 (better for large vehicles) or Utah State Route 14 from Cedar City, Utah to Long Valley Junction (high elevation/steep grades). During the construction period, travelers may want to consider using one of these roads between Zion Canyon and Bryce Canyon or Grand Canyon National Parks Monday through Friday 9:00am-4:00pm.

The road project will be administered by the Federal Highways Administration. The contractor for the project is A-T Asphalt Paving of St. George, UT. The cost of the project is approximately 6 million dollars and is being funded from a combination of Federal Highways Administration and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act monies. When the road is completed, it will be the color of typical asphalt. In the near future, it will be chip sealed and regain the red color for which it is famous.

All parties involved in the project worked together to come up with the best work schedule possible, given the size and complexity of the project. The concerns of local residents, businesses, and travelers, as well as safety and the impact on park operations were considered. This construction schedule offers the least amount of confusion, less disruption to visitor travel, a safer experience for travelers and workers, and allows the work to be completed in a shorter time period. With this option, vehicle backups into Springdale associated with construction delays are mitigated and traffic will run normally in the town during work times. Tunnel escort hours have been extended in the morning to allow more opportunity for travelers with large vehicles to pass through the park.

People visiting Zion Canyon via the park's South Entrance at Springdale, Utah, who are camping, accessing the shuttle system, staying at the Zion Lodge or in the town of Springdale will not be in the construction zone. Visitors in Zion Canyon are encouraged to use the free town shuttle to avoid possible delays entering the park. Look for blue Park and Ride signs in Springdale and ride the free shuttle to the park entrance.

For updated information, Call 435-772-3256 (press 1, then 4) or visit the park website at www.nps.gov/zion.

-NPS-